This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A method of laying out traces on a virtual printed circuit board (PCB), comprising:

routing a first trace on the virtual PCB;

routing a second trace on the virtual PCB, the second trace causing crosstalk; and

reducing crosstalk between the first trace and the second trace by inserting a spacer between the traces.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said reducing crosstalk between the first trace and the second trace comprises:

examining crosstalk rules; and

automatically inserting the artificial obstruct between the victim trace and the aggressor trace in accordance with the crosstalk rules.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the crosstalk rules comprise noise thresholds.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the noise thresholds comprise at least one of physical thresholds and electrical thresholds.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the crosstalk rules comprise aggressor distances that specify the minimum distance that a first trace must be from a second trace.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, additionally comprising:

modifying the first trace; and

automatically modifying the artificial obstruct to maintain a specified clearance between the first and second traces.

7. (Canceled).

8. (Canceled).

9. (Canceled).

10. (Canceled).

11. (Canceled).

12. (Canceled).

13. (Canceled).

14. (Canceled).

15. (Canceled).

16. (Canceled).

17. (Canceled).

18. (Canceled).

19. (New) A method of routing traces on a virtual printed circuit board, comprising:

routing a first trace on the virtual printed circuit board;

positioning a spacer adjacent to the first trace; and

routing a second trace on the virtual separated from the first trace by the spacer.